

## Message Text

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ACTION CU-04

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FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4292

INFO USIA WASHDC

UNCLAS BELGRADE 5158

USIA FOR IEU

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: OEXC YO

SUBJ: 14TH STRUGA POETRY FESTIVAL

REF: STATE 197840

1. THE FOURTEENTH STRUGA POETRY FESTIVAL TOOK PLACE THIS YEAR FROM AUGUST 28-SEPTEMBER 2 AT VARIOUS SITES THROUGHOUT MACEDONIA WITH MAIN EVENTS SCHEDULED IN TOWNS OHRID AND STRUGA. US ABLY REPRESENTED BY AMSPEC CLARENCE MAJOR AS WELL AS BY HERBERT KHUNER, AN AMERICAN POET RESIDENT VIENNA AND A REGULAR PARTICIPANT AT FESTIVAL.

2. POET-PRESIDENT LEOPOLD SENGHOR OF SENEGAL, WINNER OF STRUGA GOLDEN WREATH AWARD, WAS PRINCIPAL ATTRACTION THIS YEAR'S FESTIVAL. PUBLICITY GENERATED BY HIS PRESENCE EXTENSIVE; BUT MEDIA DEVOTED RELATIVELY LITTLE ATTENTION REMAINING DELEGATES OR FESTIVAL ITSELF THUS CAUSING CONSIDERABLE ADVERSE COMMENTS AMONG CERTAIN PARTICIPANTS.

3. AS USUAL, FESTIVAL PLAGUED BY BAD ORGANIZATION. PRESENCE CHIEF OF STATE MADE MATTERS MORE DIFFICULT FOR ORGANIZERS WHO TENDED FOCUS EXCESSIVE ATTENTION TO POLITICAL RATHER THAN POETIC ASPECTS OF EVENT. ONE MACEDONIAN CONTACT CONFIDED TO EMBOFF THAT STRUGA WAS NOT A MEETING OF POETS, BUT A FESTIVAL FOR POLITICIANS.

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4. CLARANCE MAJOR, LIKE MOST DELEGATES FROM OTHER COUNTRIES, PLAYED RELATIVELY MINOR ROLE IN FESTIVAL. MAJOR WAS MEMBER SYMPOSIUM PANEL DISCUSSING FESTIVAL'S MAIN THEME: POETRY THROUGH RESISTANCE, REVOLUTION AND LIBERTY. ALONG WITH ALL THE OTHER DELEGATES, HE ALSO READ TWO OF HIS POEMS TO LARGE AUDIENCE (ESTIMATED 2,000) AT FESTIVAL'S MAIN PUBLIC EVENT ENTITLED BRIDGES ON EVENING AUG 31. MACEDONIAN TRANSLATIONS ALL POEMS, INCLUDING THOSE OF SENGHOR, PROVIDED BY ORGANIZERS.

5. CAO AND SKOPJE USIC DIRECTOR PAID SHORT VISIT TO FESTIVAL. BOTH CONCLUDE THAT IT OFFERS LIMITED OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE OR EXPAND CONTACTS WITH IMPORTANT YUGOSLAV WRITERS AND INTELLECTUALS, MANY OF WHOM REGARD STRUGA AS LESS THAN SERIOUS AND BOYCOTT IT. PAROCHIAL ASPECT FESTIVAL PARTICULARLY VISIBLE THIS YEAR IN SPITE OF FACT THAT MORE COUNTRIES THAN EVER BEFORE PARTICIPATED IN EVENT. AS FESTIVAL PRESENTLY CONSTITUTED, PARTICIPATION DOES NOT SERVE TO ADVANCE POST OBJECTIVES IN YUGOSLAVIA. ACCORDINGLY, BELGRADE DOES NOT RECOMMEND FURTHER EXPENDITURE USG FUNDS TO SUPPORT AMSPEC GRANT THIS EVENT. RATHER, POST PREFERS REASSESS SITUATION AFTER STRUGA 1976 AND MAKE ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATION AT THAT TIME.  
SILBERMAN

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